

**Purpose:**

To establish policy for ARDOT's official use of social media for public users and employees, and to outline acceptable use for employees on any personal accounts.

**Applicability:**

This policy applies to all public users engage in ARDOT branded social media spaces, ARDOT employees, and contractors engaged in social media on behalf of ARDOT as part of their duties.

**Definitions:**

"Social media" is an umbrella term that encompasses the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and content creation. Social media uses many technologies and forms, such as blogs, photo and video sharing, podcasts, social networking, and any other user-generated media.

"Employees" refers to ARDOT employees in the Public Information Office and any ARDOT employees who manage an ARDOT-affiliated social media account.

The acronym MCM refers to the Media Communications Manager in the Public Information Office.

The acronym PIO refers to the Public Information Office in the Arkansas Department of Transportation

**Policy for Public Users:****A. Emergency use:**

- In case of a life-threatening situation or other emergency please call 911.
- Please do not use official ARDOT social media channels to report emergency transportation needs including, but not limited to traffic accidents, stranded motorists, and road hazards. To report such information, contact the Arkansas State Police.

**B. Acceptable use:**

- ARDOT's social media channels exist to provide access to information about the Department and to give a platform for interaction between the Department and the public. The guidelines for such interactions are outlined here. Posting on ARDOT's social media channels constitutes an acceptance of the following terms:

- i. Comments posted by others on this page are not the opinion of the Department, nor does the Department endorse any third-party participants on any ARDOT social media platforms.
- ii. The Department reserves the right to remove, and if needed block, anyone who posts inappropriate material as determined by ARDOT and outlined in this policy. ARDOT shall not be liable for removing or blocking any posts.
- iii. ARDOT's social media channels serve as limited public forums and all content published is subject to monitoring. User generated posts will be removed or rejected when the content:
  1. Contains obscenity.
  2. Contains offensive terms that target protected classes.
  3. Is threatening, harassing or discriminatory.
  4. Incites or promotes violence or illegal activities.
  5. Contains information that reasonably could compromise someone's safety.
  6. Advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or any entity or individual.
  7. Promotes or endorses social causes, political campaigns, or candidates.

## **Policy for Employees Operating Official ARDOT Accounts:**

### **C. Responsibilities for official spokespeople:**

- Employees will always remember that published content is permanently in the public domain and will conduct themselves accordingly when representing the department.
- Employees will always respect copyright, fair use, financial disclosure, and Freedom of Information (FOI) laws.
- Employees will monitor social media sites daily for any inappropriate or offensive content.
- Employees will maintain appropriate disclaimers regarding ARDOT's presence on social media sites.

### **D. Content Management:**

- ARDOT employees managing ARDOT social media accounts should use best judgment when choosing what content to "retweet," "like," "share," comment on, what accounts to follow, etc. These actions should not include any content that is overtly obscene, vulgar, sexual, political, racial, discriminatory, etc. Content should be within the scope of ARDOT's mission and values.

- ARDOT will not and cannot screen outside comments before they are posted on its social media sites; inappropriate or incorrect content will be removed when possible.
  - i. Removal of any post (no matter the origin) will require thorough documentation, including:
    - 1. A screenshot of the original post.
    - 2. The reason the post is being removed.
      - a. General criteria for removal of information includes anything that: contains incorrect data, vulgarity, discrimination, threats; is posted for religious or political purposes; is related to illegal activities; or is posted for personal financial gain.
    - 3. If a post directed at ARDOT or ARDOT personnel is threatening, Public Information Office staff will document the incident and report the offending social media user via the corresponding social media outlet's reporting process.
      - a. When documenting an incident, the content of the threatening social media post(s), the offending user's account information and a timeline of the event must be captured and developed into a report by the Media Communications Manager (MCM).
      - b. Once the incident information has been captured and developed into a report, the MCM will then forward that information to the PIO, who will determine if the incident should be forwarded to appropriate authorities.
- ARDOT's social media pages should have a disclaimer, when possible, that reads: "Privacy and legal info: ARDOT reserves the right to delete or hide messages that are obscene, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, or off-topic. ARDOT also reserves the right to ban a person if his or her messages are obscene, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, or off topic."
  - i. ARDOT reserves the right to *not* engage with or respond to a user's comment(s) on social media when appropriate.
  - ii. ARDOT reserves the right to remove a user's comment or post on an ARDOT page if it contains inappropriate content.
    - 1. ARDOT PIO employees should remind the user that the post violates our terms of acceptable use and record the user's information and offensive post for internal tracking.

2. If a user inquires as to why their post or comment was removed, ARDOT PIO employees should cite the reason(s) why the post violated our social media policy.
- iii. ARDOT reserves the right to ban a person only in the most extreme of circumstances and only after consulting ARDOT's legal department.

#### E. Social Media Monitoring

- ARDOT monitors social media for situational awareness on a day-to-day basis and during any high-impact event related to transportation (demolitions, large accident, inclement weather, etc.).
  - i. This social listening can include:
    1. Searching for event-relative and/or trending keywords, hashtags, and geo-located information.
    2. Identification and mitigation of rumors
    3. Use of Hootsuite and other social media monitoring tools to categorize and track information streams.
    4. Reporting of issues discovered during monitoring to the MCM.

#### F. Requests to use ARDOT Branded Social Media:

- Requests for use of any ARDOT social media tool to communicate program information must be reviewed and approved by ARDOT MCM and PIO.
  - i. Email the MCM and PIO to discuss a communications plan for the social media use. Include who the target audience is, what will be communicated, what the goals are, the recommended message, and the requested date and time for posting. In most cases this will be a collaborative process.
  - ii. If the posting may generate responses or questions, provide program contact information to the MCM for any follow-up inquiries.
  - iii. The PIO will approve any new social media activity before it "goes live".
- Staff requesting the development of an additional social media tool (i.e. a specific Facebook page, Twitter account or blog) should first speak to their supervisor to ensure programmatic agreement on the proposed use of the tool.
- No other department employee is authorized to speak for ARDOT on social media unless specifically authorized by the PIO.

#### G. Security for ARDOT social media accounts, as requested by ARDOT's IT Department:

- The password for any ARDOT social media page should be:

- i. A minimum of 12 characters
  - ii. Include NO dictionary words
  - iii. Utilize a passphrase
- The account should use multi-factor authentication linked to an ARDOT phone.
- The account should be created using an ARDOT email address.

## **Expectations for Employees on their Personal Social Media Accounts:**

- H. Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on any form of user-generated media. Please remember that the internet never forgets, and work-related content is subject to FOI disclosure. Be aware that others will associate employees with their employer.
- I. ARDOT employees are encouraged to respectfully engage with the ARDOT branded social media channels and on ARDOT related topics if they desire to.
  - When talking about ARDOT related topics on social media, employees should disclose that they work for ARDOT. Friends may know where an employee works, but their network of friends and colleagues may not.
    - i. Employees should disclose they are an employee of ARDOT in any post that discusses ARDOT-related topics.
    - ii. Employees commenting on ARDOT related issues should also clearly state that the opinions expressed are personal and not representative of ARDOT in any way.
  - At no point will an employee be required to engage with ARDOT branded social media with their personal accounts.
  - At no point will an employee be asked or required to represent ARDOT with their personal social media account. Official ARDOT spokespeople will use ARDOT branded channels.
  - Employees are prohibited by FOI laws from sharing any protected information that they may be exposed to in the course of performing their job duties at ARDOT. If you are unsure if information should be shared or not, please reach out to your supervisor (or whomever maintains that specific information) for guidance.
- J. ARDOT employees who engage in racism, bigotry, misogyny, express or implied threats of harassment or physical harm, or hate speech on social media may be found in violation of the law, ARDOT's code of ethics, or both.
  - Refer to ARDOT's Human Resources Department's handbook for complete details on this subject.
  - Any reports made to the Public Information Office of inappropriate content posted by an ARDOT employee on social media will be passed on to the Human Resources department as a personnel matter.

- K. Pursuant to Arkansas Code Annotated § 11-2-124 (2013), Department managers, supervisors and administrative officials are prohibited from *requiring, requesting, suggesting, or causing* a current or prospective employee to disclose his or her username or password for a personal social media account *or to provide access* to the content of his or her personal social media account (emphasis added).